

Message Text

SECRET

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FM USDEL SECRETARY IN RIO DE JANEIRO

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTO 04103

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO, AG

SUBJ: ATHERTON TRAVEL TO MOROCCO AND ALGERIA

REF: TOSEC 040146

1. FYI ONLY. LAST WEEK, RACHID ZEGHAR, ALGERIAN BUSINESSMAN AND CONFIDANT OF BOUMEDIENE, TALKED WITH UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON EXPRESSING DEEP CONCERN THAT US POSITION ON SAHARA THREATENS SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN US-GOA RELATION AND INDICATING THAT IF HASSAN DOES NOT HONOR PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION BOUMEDIENE IS PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN PROLONGED CONFRONTATION WITH GOM. ZEGHAR SAID BOUMEDIENE WOULD BE FORCED TO TURN TO SOVIETS FOR MORE DIRECT SUPPORT, BUT PREFERS NOT TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION IF HE CAN FIND FACESAVING WAY OUT OF CURRENT IMPASSE. HE APPEALED FOR EVEN-HANDED US POLICY ON SAHARA AND ASKED US TO INTERVENE TO PERSUADE HASSAN TO ACCEPT REFERENDUM IN SAHARA. HE ALSO INDICATED BOUMEDIENE BELIEVES US PRESSED SPAIN TO NEGOTIATE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. ZEGHAR RECOMMENDED THAT I VISIT ALGIERS TO MEET WITH BOUMEDIENE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS PROBLEM, OR IF I WAS UNABLE TO DO SO, THAT ATHERTON SEE BOUMEDIENE. IT IS CLEAR ZEGHAR WAS ACTING WITH BOUMEDIENE'S BLESSINGS AND THAT BOUMEDIENE

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EXPECTED US RESPONSE.

2. ZEGHAR WAS TOLD THAT OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE HASSAN WAS LIMITED, RECALLING UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO GET HASSAN TO CALL OFF GREEN MARCH. ALSO, HE WAS REMINDED OF REALITY THAT MOROCCO IS NOW IN SAHARA AND GIVEN REGIME'S POLITICAL INVESTMENT IN THE AREA NEITHER WE NOR ANYONE ELSE COULD PREVAIL ON GOM TO WITHDRAW OR SEEK A REFERENDUM. WE ASSURED ZEGHAR THAT WE WANTED TO PRESERVE OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH MOROCCO AND ALGERIA AND HOPED THEY WOULD PEACEFULLY RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND AVOID INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ISSUE. WE PROMISED TO CONSIDER ALGERIA'S VIEWS.

END FYI.

3. UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON HAS FOR SOME TIME SCHEDULED A VISIT TO ALGIERS FOR DISCUSSIONS OF CIEC AND BILATERAL ECONOMIC MATTERS. RECENT COMMUNICATION FROM EMBASSY ALGIERS INDICATED BOUMEDIENE ALSO WANTED TO DISCUSS OTHER ASPECTS OF SITUATION IN AREA, INCLUDING SAHARA QUESTION. I HAVE THEREFORE INSTRUCTED ATHERTON TO ACCOMPANY ROBINSON TO ALGIERS AND ALSO TO STOP IN RABAT IF THIS IS AGREEABLE TO GOM. FYI: OUR FEELING IS THAT HASSAN WOULD PREFER ATHERTON VISIT MOROCCO BEFORE ALGIERS, TO UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE OF US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, BUT IN INFORMING GOM OF HIS PLANS YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR WE WILL BE GUIDED BY MOROCCAN PREFERENCES AS TO ORDER OF VISITS. YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW THAT WE DO NOT RPT NOT ENVISAGE BEING DRAWN INTO ANY KIND OF MEDIATOR ROLE ON SAHARA DISPUTE. END FYI.

4. ATHERTON WOULD PLAN TO ARRIVE IN RABAT ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT, FEBRUARY 25, AND HOPES THAT HASSAN COULD RECEIVE HIM ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26 SO HE COULD PROCEED TO ALGIERS FEBRUARY 27. (WE UNDERSTAND THERE ARE NO FLIGHTS TO ALGIERS ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, WHICH IS DATE BY WHICH ATHERTON MUST BE THERE TO CONNECT UP WITH ROBINSON).

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5. YOU SHOULD URGENTLY INFORM GOM OF ATHERTON TRAVEL PLANS ALONG LINES PARAS 3 AND 4 ABOVE AND ASCERTAIN WHETHER GOM IS RECEPTIVE TO SUCH A VISIT AND REQUEST AN AUDIENCE FOR HIM WITH KING HASSAN ON FEBRUARY 26. PLEASE INFORM DEPT NEA/ATHERTON OF GOM RESPONSE BY IMMEDIATE CABLE REPEATED TO ME.

6. DEPARTMENT PLEASE CONFIRM TO ATHERTON SUNDAY THAT

THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN SENT DIRECT TO RABAT.
KISSINGER

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NNN

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